

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 820

By Kyle

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John Wilson Spence of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John Wilson Spence; and

WHEREAS, John Spence was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, he served with acumen and alacrity as a newspaper reporter for the *Press-Scimitar*, in which position he earned the respect of his peers and community alike for the exemplary quality of his work; under the astute direction of Editor Edward J. Meeman, Mr. Spence wrote crusading articles against boss politics and segregated schools; and

WHEREAS, he rendered sterling service as the Assistant Commissioner of the US Commission on Civil Rights during the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, a public servant of the highest order, John Spence taught political science to students in Memphis' inner city community college, helping to develop a new generation of activists; and

WHEREAS, born in Murfreesboro, John Spence attended high school at Sewanee and received his bachelor's degree at Rhodes College and his master's degree at Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Spence bravely served his country during World War II, serving as navigator of a B17 crew that was part of the first U.S. bomber group to cross the Atlantic to England during the War; he was shot down in combat over France and escaped with the help of the French Underground; and

WHEREAS, John Spence was deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of sixty-two years, the former Mary Ann Simonton, and was the proud father of Martha Bonner and John Wilson Spence III; and

WHEREAS, he will be sorely missed by his daughter-in-law, Angela Murphy, and two grandchildren, Murphy Spence and John Wilson Spence IV; and

WHEREAS, John Wilson Spence leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of John Wilson Spence, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Spence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.